

TOWN OF ACTON  
WASTEWATER ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD TASKFORCE

(WANT)

MINUTES

January 4, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Council On Aging Facility

Present: Peter Mosbach, Mike Geis, Kent Sharp, Mark Tawa, Janet Adachi.

Town Staff: Doug Halley

Visitors: Al English, Howard Sussman, David Mayall

Peter Mosbach called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes. The minutes of December 7, 2010 were approved.

II. Citizens Concerns. Howard Sussman and Al English commented about the still unidentified resident in the neighborhood with the highest water bill, according to the information Al English provided in his most recent presentation.

Mr. English expressed concern about the arrangement for Committee member Bill McInnis to attend only as needed. Mr. English said that if all Committee members decided to do the same thing, it would be a problem. He thinks that if Bill is not going to attend meetings regularly, he should abstain from voting when he does attend. Janet noted that if Bill were to resign, the Committee would have to find another Board of Health representative to replace him.

Mike said that Committee members need to agree on the cost of septic replacement, which according to the recent survey done for the Committee was \$22K on average. Mark said that the Committee also should make clear that the average-cost number is associated with the study. Mr. Sussman noted that the study covers "nominal systems," meaning that if a property has major problems, the cost will be higher.

III. Frequently-Asked Questions and Answers - Status. Kent said that he has been puzzling over how to approach the development of Q and A. Should the approach be "What laws are involved?" Or along the lines of "Why do I have to hook up to the sewer system if it's in my area? Because Massachusetts General Law says so. . . ."

Janet said the Committee should assume that the audience is unfamiliar with the subject, and address basic issues such as the second question Kent posed. How much are the fees, who decides and on what basis, etc. Mike noted that he is doing the Q & A for Matt Mostoller's presentation and essentially doing an article. Janet said the Q & A could introduce the topic, and fact sheets and articles could provide more depth. Mr. Sussman offered to burn the information onto compact discs once the information is collected.

IV. Cost-Comparisons. Mr. English is developing scenarios for a presentation, for example, Peter's suggestion of looking at the issue of septic replacement after 30 years. He wants to be sure that the numbers are understandable and will be working with Doug and

Peter, as well as Steve Barratt of the Finance Department, and Mr. Sussman.

Peter asked whether all innovative alternative systems require annual water-testing. Doug said no, that each system is different with different costs. A Presby system requires minimal inspection. Cultech requires no follow-up. Single-Air, Bio-Clere other systems require more follow-up: the more the system does, the more the follow-up. Doug said treatment would require testing, whereas filtering would require visual inspection.

Mr. English said that in his scenarios, he is using \$32K for a high-end I/A system, and \$22K for a standard system.

Mike said that one neighborhood resident has a Presby system that requires an annual inspection costing \$500. If the resident were certified to do the inspection, the cost would be lower.

Mr. English asked why ledge would be a problem for sewerage in Spencer-Tuttle-Flint, given the presence of piping for public water. Kent recalls that the problem was with the proposed location of the pipes. Doug does not believe that ledge is an issue, though some in the neighborhood thought it was. Mr. English suggested that the Committee address ledge in the proposed Q & A, and say that ledge is not an issue.

Kent thinks that Mr. English is correct in assuming that if the initial betterment cost is low enough, people will have less reason not to have sewers.

Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

- Janet Adachi

Documents Discussed at Meeting and Attached:

- Minutes of 12/7/2010
- 1/3/2011 list by Kent Sharp of possible Q & A topics for 5/4/2010 John Murray presentation
- Factsheets from Doug Halley about Acton's Sewer System and Treatment Facility; and Innovative and Alternative (I/A) Septic Systems